

A

# REVIEW

OF THE

# STATE

OF THE

# ENGLISH NATION.

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Thursday, March, 14. 1706.

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I Had ended this Subject with the last *Review*, had not the appearing of the Stock-Jobbers and Drapers, at the Bar of the House of Lords, and their Clamours, rather than Reasons given me occasion to let the World see, how Weakly they have been drawn in, to Oppose the General Prosperity of Trade.

The Gentlemen, like their Cause, appear'd very Hot; for 'tis their Hot Proceeding, that is partly the occasion of all this Mischief; I omit some very gross Forgeries, which they Impos'd upon the House, and which their Appearing, prevented the poor Debtor Opposing, least his just Defence, should Exasperate the Furious Creditor, and the Bill not Passing fix him in his Hands ever after.

I omit, how in their Instances they In-

jur'd the Men they Charg'd, and Impos'd upon the House of Lords, in Cases which they ought to Blush for, and assure Mr. W——, that if I am not as Grossly Impos'd upon, as he Impos'd upon their Lordships, he acted a part there, which besides its other Titles, has one I care not to Name; and I shall take particular care, to Detest him in the Case he objected against, of the Draper in the *Review*, of which he thinks himself very secure.

I confess, I could not but be Sorry, to see some Gentlemen there, who but few Months ago, were, some very near, and some in the Condition of Bankrupts themselves, who having been forgiven the Ten Thousand Talents, were now for taking their Neighbours by the Throat; these Men certainly had no Business there, unless it was

to.

to be brought as Instances, that where the Lenity of the Creditor will permit, Men fall into Trade again, and Recover, which is the very thing we are upon.

But if these Gentlemen were to have had the Ghosts of those poor Men, that with their Families have Perish'd, under their Merciless Hands, appear'd against them at the Bar of the House, as without doubt they will at a more Awful Bar another time; they would not have dar'd to have mention'd their Mercy to Creditors, of which Thousands of Families are now Witnessing with the Text, That the tender Mercies of English Creditors are Cruelties.

To say, that when Debtors are Honest, Creditors are always kind; as one Gentleman had the Assurance to say, to call it *no worse*; is so far from Truth, that I Engage to their Orator, Mr. W—r, for every Debtor that he can produce, to whom Creditors have been tender and Merciful, any farther than as regarded their meer Abstracted Interest; I'll produce him twenty that have been Ruin'd, Bury'd in Gaols, Starv'd, and Destroy'd, after a Thousand Honest Offers, of Surrendring all they had in the World to them; nay, and while that all was considerable too, if Mens Passions had not over-rul'd their Reason; who being deny'd Terms, have been pursu'd with Commissions, and Harass'd with all sorts of Cruelty, till they had wasted, in the Lingring Death of a Prison that they had to offer, and made utterly incapable, either to help themselves or their Creditors; and son. of these Men of better Characters (asking their Pardon) than any of those that appear'd against them.

I come now to these Gentlemen's Wise Arguments, and I am Sorry to see, one Wife and Honest Man led away by this Multitude, to fall in with such Imperfect Notions, to leave it to the Oath of the Debtor, Exposes the Creditor say they, to Cheats and Frauds of every Man that will be a Rogue, and forswear himself.

Alas! who doubts it? and this is Arguing against the whole Bill; and yet these

Gentlemen say, they are for the Bill, but against the Clause.

Now Pray, Gentlemen, consider your Justice, and hear it in Plain English; You are for the Bill, that is, you are for the Hanging part of the Bill, for having the Debtor Surrender himself, and all his Effects, and your Commissioners have Power to Swear him; there you will take his Oath; and thank your Mercy, you are for having him Hang'd if he does not, but you are not for having him Discharg'd at all, nor for obliging all his Creditors to come into the Commission——Indeed, Mr. W—r, this is an admirable Specimen of the Tendernefs of You Gentlemen *Drapers*, and of your Justice also; and I wonder your Conscience, if not intirely Suppress'd, did not give such a thump against your Heart, as to prevent your Expoling your Principle so much.

To take the Debtors all, and distribute it among a few, and leave him at the Mercy of the rest — To have him Hang'd, if he does not Deliver, and Starv'd if he does; to have his Oath taken against himself, but refus'd for himself; I wonder what Sign that Gentleman Lives at, and would desire him to Write these Principles of his upon it, and see who would Trade with him.

I confess, 'tis the Debtors Happiness to have such Adversaries as to Argument, before such Judges as the House of Peers; and but that I thought it would be an Affront to their Lordships Judgments, to Expose such Absurdities as these, and that they were too Gross to need a Reply, and considering it seem'd speaking our own Case, I had offer'd these Things at the same Place.

The Lords could not but know these were Creditors, that they stood there Embrued with the Blood of Murther'd Debtors, and Defending that Barbarity, which the Nation Groans under, which Foreign Countries wonder at us for, and which their Lordships were apply'd to, for the Redress of, and no Doubt, but their Arguings Pleaded for themselves.

But



But, say these tender Hearted Gentlemen, another Year we will come and Concert a Bill with you, that shall reach every side, and Please you all.

Speaking for my own part, Gentlemen, I declare my self Content, if you never Pass any such Bill; but give me Leave, to be very plain with you, Gentlemen Creditors, if this Delay be your —First, you are the Murderers of all that Dye in Prison, or are Starv'd with Want, in the mean time; if any more Distress'd Souls Stab themselves at *Cambray-House*, as you had a Dreadful Example this very Week, from the Insufferable Extremities of these things; their Blood is of your shedding, lies at your Door, and the Cries of those Wretched Miserables, will not be a *Curse Causeless*; for why did you not make this Voluntary Clamour a Month ago? —To say you did not know of it, is a most Ridiculous Evasion —And what you would not accept from one of your Debtors, *was it not Printed in the Votes*? If one of you, Mr. *W* —r, or any body should Swear he never knew of it — And your Chimerical Jury should sit upon it, as you would have them sit upon the poor Debtors Oath; Do you think they would Vote to believe you? —If you did not know it before, how did you know it now? —Was you alarm'd by some of your Brethren in Cruelty, that left the Honest Debtors should escape your Hands, Summon'd you up, rais'd the *Posse*, brought up their Mob, Stock-Jobber, and Broker, Hand in Hand with the Draper, to make a *Jonathan's* Coffee-house, at the Bar of the House of Lords, and Clamour those Families into Misery now, that they had trick'd and Cheated into Mischiefs before?

Nor are they Guilty of the Destruction of the Person only; but, Gentlemen, You are the Thieves, of every Penny of the Publick Stock of the Nation, that these People are forc'd in this mean time, to carry away with them into Foreign Countries.

You are the Ruine of every *English* Manufacture they Erect in Foreign Coun-

tries, things you jest with, because you not understand; but is as certain, as that a Stock-Jobber has more Difficulty than his Neighbour to be an Honest Man.

*Lastly*, You are Thieves to the rest of the willing Creditors, and Rob them of all that Money, that the Honest Debtors shall be less able to Surrender next Year to you than they could now; and I could fill this Paper with but a few of the Unaccountable Injuries you have Attempted to do, by your Robbing the Nation of so good a Law, which would keep our Men, Money, and Manufactures at Home.

And now Pray, Gentlemen, give me leave, who am so far Dis-interested in this Affair, to Expostulate with you a little.

——What Benefit do you expect by this Opposition? Do you think, that between this and the next Session of Parliament, any Debtor will be such an Ass, to offer you any Composition? Will you expect to find any separate Advantage, by the intermediate Prosecutions of this or that Person, but what a Statute at the next Session shall retrieve? —You say, that next Session you will join with these Gentlemen, in a Bill for General Relief —

I tell you, you know not what *Spirits* you are of, you would be farther from it next Year, than you are now; because all you have made of the Poor Debtor in the mean time, must be Refunded, and because he will have less to satisfy you then, than now; and I would be glad any Man would Calculate for the Publick Use — How much Creditors Money, shall be Spent this Year, in meer Bread and Subsistence, for the Families of your Poor Debtors, who, while you keep them hid and Conceal'd, must Live and be Fed; how much your City Thieves, the Commissioners, shall Expend this Year, at the *Irish* Chamber at *Guild-Hall*, to the Tune of 10 to 20 *l.* a Sitting, with its *Et Cetera's*, to Destroy the Estates of the Bankrupt, and leave him nothing to Pay?

Who shall Answer for these things, Gentlemen? And with what Face can you blame a Debtor, that shall reserve himself

self, and his Effects till next Year, to see if you will be as good as your Words?

You tell us, Gentlemen, of *P* —'s Knavery, and I agree with you, it was bad enough; but why did you at last Capitulate with Mr. *P* —? the Reason is plain, you took what you could have, because you could get no more — 'Tis Barbarous, Gentlemen, and you are worse K —s in it than *P* —, that Deliver'd him for your own Interest, and won't deliver the Honest Men, that his Rupture Ruin'd, when they offer all they have upon Oath; so that Capital Bankrupt, that Ruin'd so many Honest Men, walks the Streets, and shows his Face, and the Honest Man, that fell with his weight, lies Miserably in the *Labyrinth*, and all he has, cannot be accepted; no, not upon Oath. *Barbarous injustice!* This Oath is not to be taken, because a Knave will Forswear himself; who shall be Judge?

A Jury shall sit to Judge of his Oath; this is a most Preposterous Suggestion; a Jury of Angels indeed, that could Detect Thought, might do well, and I would have these Gentlemen move for an Act to that end — But what Jury shall Judge, when a Man Swears, whether it be true or no? Who shall enquire into his Conscience, or look in his Face to see if he turns Pale, or feel his Pulse, to find if his *Heart don't jostle with his Conscience*? These Preposterous Offers, make me suspect the Integrity, as well as Understanding of the People, that make them. —

Pray, Gentlemen, Note but the Trick here; the Poor Bankrupt must first give in his Estate, Surrender himself and all he has; and first you must have it in the Profession, and he actually Swear, and then you will have a Jury Judge, whether he Speaks true or no — And what if the Jury doubts him? Why then, he shall not be Discharg'd — And yet you have all his Estate? Come,

Gentlemen, let but one Recapitulate this Matter with you — if the Jury does not think fit to take his Oath, will you put him in *Statu quo*, deliver him into the Place of Retreat he was in when he Surrender'd, and deliver him back the Effects he Voluntarily deliver'd? If not, where's the Justice of all this? The same thing may be said of the present Amendment, where the Commissioners Certificate only shall quit the Debtor, and yet the Commissioners not bound to grant that Certificate, or show Cause of Refusal; but this is none of my business. I could farther Expose these Trade-Shams, but I shall reserve the rest, till I see your Honesty appear next Session, as you mention.

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